

Washington State Ferries Update

Briefing Paper
Prepared for the November 2003
Transportation Commission Meeting

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PURPOSE:

To provide an update on Washington State Ferries (WSF) including a review of historical ridership statistics and trends, the status of work on provisos included in ESHB 1163, and the status of work on implementing a claims management process for workplace injuries.

ACTION/OUTCOME:

This briefing is for information only and no action will be required of the Commission.

BACKGROUND:

WSF presented historical ridership information at a Commission meeting recently held in Silverdale. At the request of the Commission, this information will be presented again at this meeting of the Commission.

During the 2003 session, the Legislature passed the transportation appropriations bill ESHB 1163 which included provisos to conduct a variety of studies to improve operating and capital decisions. Several of the provisos require reports to the Legislature by December 1, 2003.

The 2003 – 2005 budget for WSF includes new funding for implementation of a claims management process for Jones Act claims.

DISCUSSION:

WSF will report on current issues facing WSF including:

- Historical traffic patterns and trends. All routes currently carry more riders than they did in 1951; however the rate of growth has varied between service areas. In the Puget Sound area, the more southerly Fauntleroy/Vashon/Southworth and Seattle/Bremerton routes were historically traveled the most. As road connections to the Olympic Peninsula improved and suburbanization spread northward, the more northerly Edmonds/Kingston and Seattle/Bainbridge routes eventually grew to become the busiest in the system. In other areas such as the routes out of Anacortes, ridership has increased tenfold in the last half century. The report will also cover

revenue and ridership achieved in fiscal year 2003, and early trends in fiscal year 2004.

- The status of work on each proviso included in ESHB 1163.
- Implementation of a more proactive management process for Jones Act injury claims by vessel crew employees. The report will provide a summary review of accident/injury costs, steps underway or contemplated internally to improve cost controls and better manage claims, and plans and options for third-party administrator services to supplement those efforts.

RECOMMENDATION:

This briefing is for information only.

For further information, contact Sam Kuntz, CFO, Washington State Ferries at 206-515-3403.